

CHAPTER 4 ADVOCACY & LEGAL RESOURCES

“It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent, but rather the one most adaptable to change.” ~ Clarence Darrow

This section provides information for anyone interested in gaining a better understanding of their criminal history and how it will impact their life beyond incarceration. In addition, some agencies were selected for their ability to provide direct and/or indirect advocacy and assistance with navigating the criminal justice system and overcoming obstacles to successful community reintegration.

CRIMINAL RECORD REPOSITORIES

Federal and state law enforcement agencies maintain criminal record repositories of criminal arrests, arraignments and convictions within their specific jurisdictions. Criminal record repositories should be contacted to ensure the accuracy of the information contained within a record and to identify who is legally entitled to access such records.

FEDERAL CRIMINAL RECORD REPOSITORY

<http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/background-checks>

An F.B.I. Identification Record – often referred to as a criminal history or a “rap sheet” – is a listing of information taken from fingerprint submissions retained by the F.B.I. in connection with arrests and in some instances, federal employment, naturalization, or military service. The process of responding to an Identification Record request is generally known as a criminal background check.

If the fingerprints are related to an arrest, the Identification Record includes the name of the agency that submitted the fingerprints to the F.B.I., the date of the arrest, the arrest charge, and the disposition of the arrest, if known. All arrest data included in an Identification Record is obtained from fingerprint submissions, disposition reports, and other information submitted by agencies having criminal justice responsibilities.

Only the subject of an F.B.I. Identification Record can request a copy of their own record. Individuals typically make this request for personal review, to challenge the information on record, or to satisfy a requirement to live, work, or travel in a foreign country.

National Contact:

National Crime Information Center
1000 Custer Hollow Road
Clarksburg, WV 26306
P: 304.625.2000

Additional Resources:

U.S. Department of Justice, *Fingerprint Card – FD 258*
<http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/background-checks/standard-fingerprint-form-fd-258>

STATE CRIMINAL RECORD REPOSITORIES

State criminal record information is available by contacting the state criminal record repository for the state in which the event occurred. Individuals should contact the state agency regarding specific eligibility requirements before submitting a request for disclosure.

State Contact:

Please refer to [Appendix 4-A: State Criminal Record Repositories](#).

LEGAL ASSISTANCE & INFORMATION

If you need an attorney to advise or represent you, ask friends and family for recommendations. You can also contact the Lawyer Referral Service of your state bar association. Websites such as <http://www.abalawinfo.org> and <http://www.nolo.com> can help with answers to general legal questions.



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📞 347.973.0004

🌐 www.reentryessentials.org

📍 Reentry Essentials, Inc. 2609 East 14 Street, Suite 1018, Brooklyn, NY 11235-3915



If you cannot afford a lawyer, you may qualify for free legal help from a Legal Aid or Legal Service Corporation office. These offices generally offer legal assistance for such things as landlord-tenant relations, family matters, Social Security, welfare, and workers' compensation. If the Legal Aid office in your area does not handle your type of case, it may refer you to other local, state, or national organizations that can provide help.

Free assistance may also be available from a law school program where students, supervised by attorneys, handle a variety of legal matters. Some of these programs are open to all; others limit their service to specific groups, such as low-income persons. Contact a local law school for availability.

National Contact:

National Legal Aid and Defender Association
1140 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 900
Washington, DC 20036
P: 202.452.0620
I: <http://www.nlada.org>

Legal Services Corporation
333 K Street, NW, 3rd Floor
Washington, DC 20007
P: 202.295.1500
I: <http://www.lsc.org>

AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION

<http://www.americanbar.org>

The American Bar Association is an association of lawyers. The American Bar Association accredits law schools, and provides the public with information about the law, courts and resource guides for legal issues. Upon request, the American Bar Association may provide written assistance and referral information for those individuals who do not have access to their website or other publicly accessible legal resources.

National Contact:

American Bar Association
321 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL 60654
P: 312.988.5000

State Contact:

Please refer to [Appendix 4-B: State Bar Associations](#).

Additional Resources:

American Bar Association, *State and Local Bar Associations*
<http://shop.americanbar.org/ebus/ABAGroups/DivisionforBarServices/BarAssociationDirectories/StateLocalBarAssociations.aspx>

LAWHELP.ORG

<http://www.lawhelp.org>

LawHelp.org was created for people living on low-incomes, and the legal organizations that serve them. This website provides referrals to local legal aid and public interest law offices, basic information about legal rights, self-help information, court information, and links to social service agencies. LawHelp.org was built by Pro Bono Net, a nonprofit organization headquartered in New York, and by partnering legal aid organizations throughout the United States.

National Contact:

Pro Bono Net
151 West 30th Street, 10th Floor
New York, NY 10001
P: 212.760.2554

THE CENTER FOR CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS | JAILHOUSE LAWYER'S HANDBOOK

<http://jailhouselaw.org>

This Jailhouse Lawyer's Handbook is a resource for prisoners who wish to file federal lawsuits addressing poor conditions in prison or abuse by staff. It also contains limited general information about the American legal system. This handbook is available for free to anyone: prisoners, families, friends, activists, lawyers, and others.

The Center for Constitutional Rights hopes that you find the Handbook helpful, and that it provides some aid in protecting your rights behind bars.

For additional information, please write for the Jailhouse Lawyer's Handbook, 5th Edition at the address below.

National Contact:

The Center for Constitutional Rights
666 Broadway, 7th Floor
New York, NY 10012

Additional Resources:

The Center for Constitutional Rights, *Jailhouse Lawyer's Handbook*
http://ccrjustice.org/files/Report_JailhouseLawyersHandbook.pdf

The Center for Constitutional Rights, *Online Chapter Search*
<http://jailhouselaw.org/about-this-handbook/>

COLLATERAL CONSEQUENCES

Defined as penalties imposed automatically or authorized but not automatically required to be imposed, collateral consequences are laws and regulations that serve as barriers to employment, housing, and other services that are essential to an individual's stability in the community.

Additional Resources:

American Bar Association, *Internal Exile: Collateral Consequences of Conviction in Federal Laws and Regulations*
<http://www.abanet.org/cecs/internalexile.pdf>

American Bar Association, *National Inventory of the Collateral Consequences of Conviction*
<http://www.abacollateralconsequences.org/>

Legal Action Center, *After Prison: Roadblocks to Reentry*
<http://www.lac.org/roadblocks-to-reentry/>

VOTER FELONY DISENFRANCHISEMENT

<http://www.sentencingproject.org>

There are millions of Americans prohibited from voting due to laws that disenfranchise individuals convicted of felony offenses. Felony disenfranchisement rates vary by state, as states institute a wide range of disenfranchisement policies. The 11 most extreme states restrict individuals voting rights even after they have served their prison sentence and are no longer on probation or parole. Only two states, Maine and Vermont, do not restrict the voting rights of individuals with felony convictions, including those in prison.

If you are interested in identifying what the official voting policy is within a particular state, please contact the voting authority for that state or see the table below for more information.

State Contact:

Please refer to [Appendix 4-C: State Voter Registration Authorities](#).

Table 2: Summary of Felony Disenfranchisement Restrictions in 2017				
No Restriction	Prison	Prison & Parole	Prison, Parole & Probation	Prison, Parole, Probation & Post-Sentence – Some or All
Maine	District of Columbia	California	Alaska	Alabama
Vermont	Hawaii	Colorado	Arkansas	Arizona
	Illinois	Connecticut	Delaware	Florida
	Indiana	New York	Georgia	Iowa
	Massachusetts		Idaho	Kentucky
	Michigan		Kansas	Mississippi
	Montana		Louisiana	Nebraska
	New Hampshire		Maryland	Nevada
	North Dakota		Minnesota	Tennessee
	Ohio		Missouri	Virginia
	Oregon		New Jersey	Wyoming
	Pennsylvania		New Mexico	
	Rhode Island		North Carolina	
	Utah		South Dakota	
			Texas	
			Washington	
			West Virginia	
			Wisconsin	

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AGENCIES & ADVOCACY GROUPS

The following agencies and organizations are dedicated to ensuring the humane and fair treatment of the incarcerated and the rehabilitation of the criminal justice system within their respective areas of service.

AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION | NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

<http://www.aclu.org>

The American Civil Liberties Union handles state and federal conditions of confinement claims affecting large numbers of prisoners.

National Contact:

American Civil Liberties Union
125 Broad Street
New York, NY 10004
P: 212.549.2500

AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION | CAPITAL PUNISHMENT PROJECT

<http://www.aclu.org/capital>

The Capital Punishment Project of the American Civil Liberties Union works towards the abolishment of the death penalty.

National Contact:

American Civil Liberties Union
 Capital Punishment Project
 201 West Main Street, Suite 402
 Durham, NC 27701
 P: 919.682.5659

AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION | CRIMINAL LAW REFORM PROJECT

<http://www.aclu.org>

The Criminal Law Reform Project of the American Civil Liberties Union seeks an end to excessively harsh crime policies that result in mass incarceration and stand in the way of a just and equal society.

National Contact:

American Civil Liberties Union
 Criminal Law Reform Project
 125 Broad Street, 18th Floor
 New York, NY 10004
 P: 212.284.7340

AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION | LESBIAN, GAY, TRANSGENDER, AND AIDS PROJECT

<http://www.aclu.org/getequal>

The Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, and AIDS Project of the American Civil Liberties Union fights discrimination and moves public opinions of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender rights through the courts, legislature and public education on a national level.

National Contact:

American Civil Liberties Union
 Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, and AIDS Project
 125 Broad Street, 18th Floor
 New York, NY 10004
 P: 212.549.2627

AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION | NATIONAL IMMIGRANTS RIGHTS PROJECT

<http://www.aclu.org>

The National Immigrants Rights Project of the American Civil Liberties Union works to defend the civil and constitutional rights of immigrants through a comprehensive program of impact litigation and public education.

National Contact:

American Civil Liberties Union
 National Immigrants Rights Project
 405 14th Street, Suite 300
 Oakland, CA 94612
 P: 510.625.2010

AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION | NATIONAL WOMEN'S RIGHTS PROJECT

<http://www.aclu.org/womensrights>

The National Women's Rights Project of the American Civil Liberties Union works to empower poor women, women of color, and immigrant women who have been victimized by gender bias and face pervasive barriers to equality through litigation, community outreach, advocacy and public education.

National Contact:

American Civil Liberties Union
 National Women's Rights Project
 125 Broad Street, 18th Floor
 New York, NY 10004
 P: 212.549.2665

AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION | NATIONAL TECHNOLOGY AND LIBERTY PROGRAM

<http://www.aclu.org/privacy>

The National Technology and Liberty Program of the American Civil Liberties Union fights to preserve the American tradition that governments not use technology to track individual citizens or violate privacy unless there is evidence of wrongdoing.

National Contact:

American Civil Liberties Union
National Technology and Liberty Program
915 15th Street, NW, 6th Floor
Washington, DC 20005
P: 202.715.0817

AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION | PROGRAM ON FREEDOM OF RELIGION AND BELIEF

<http://www.aclu.org/religion>

The Program on Freedom of Religion and Belief of the American Civil Liberties Union works to preserve freedom of speech and ensure that religious liberties are protected by keeping the government out of religious matters.

National Contact:

American Civil Liberties Union
Program on Freedom of Religion and Belief
915 15th Street, NW, 2nd Floor
Washington, DC 20005
P: 202.675.2330

AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION | REPRODUCTIVE FREEDOM PROJECT

<http://www.aclu.org>

The Reproductive Freedom Project of the American Civil Liberties Union advocates for pregnant women while incarcerated to ensure the receipt of needed reproductive health services.

National Contact:

American Civil Liberties Union
Reproductive Freedom Project
125 Broad Street, 18th Floor
New York, NY 10004
P: 212.549.2665

AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION | VOTING RIGHTS PROJECT

<http://www.votingrights.org>

The Voting Rights Project of the American Civil Liberties Union works to protect the gains in political participation won by minorities since passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act, including felony disenfranchisement.

National Contact:

American Civil Liberties Union
Voting Rights Project
2600 Marquis One Tower
245 Peachtree Center Avenue, NE
Atlanta, GA 30303
P: 404.523.2721

BATTERED WOMEN'S JUSTICE PROJECT

<http://www.bwjp.org>

The Battered Women's Justice Project provides assistance to battered women charged with crimes and to their defense but does not provide direct legal assistance.

National Contact:

Battered Women's Justice Project
 1801 South Nicollet Avenue, Suite 102
 Minneapolis, MN 55403
 P: 800.903.0111

CAMPAIGN FOR THE FAIR SENTENCING OF YOUTH

<http://www.fairsentencingofyouth.org>

Campaign for the Fair Sentencing of Youth is a national coalition and clearinghouse that coordinates, develops and supports efforts to implement just alternatives to the extreme sentencing of America's youth with an emphasis on abolishing life without parole sentences for all youth.

National Contact:

Campaign for the Fair Sentencing of Youth
 1090 Vermont Avenue, NW, Suite 400
 Washington, DC 20005
 P: 202.289.4673

CITIZENS UNITED FOR REHABILITATION OF ERRANTS | FEDERAL PRISON CHAPTER

<http://www.fedcure.org>

A special interest chapter of the National Citizens United for Rehabilitation of Errants (C.U.R.E.) organization, FedCURE advocates on behalf of the federal inmate population. Realizing that successful advocacy can only occur when society has been enlightened about federal prison realities, FedCURE seeks to create a paradigm where elected officials and American society have a clear understanding of the issues confronted by the federal inmate population.

National Contact:

Citizens United for Rehabilitation of Errants
 Federal Prison Chapter
 P.O. Box 15667
 Plantation, FL 33318
 P: 904.861.7659

CITIZENS UNITED FOR REHABILITATION OF ERRANTS | NATIONAL CHAPTER

<http://www.curenational.org>

Citizens United for Rehabilitation of Errants (C.U.R.E.) is a national organization with state and special interest chapters that advocate for rehabilitative opportunities for prisoners and less reliance on incarceration.

National Contact:

Citizens United for Rehabilitation of Errants
 National Capitol Station
 P.O. Box 2310
 Washington, DC 20013
 P: 202.789.2126

CRITICAL RESISTANCE | NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

<http://www.criticalresistance.org>

Critical Resistance is a national nonprofit organization that works to end society's reliance on prisons, policing and other forms of social control as solutions to social problems. Critical Resistance challenges the prison industrial complex by organizing and building relationships with incarcerated men and women in an effort to effect change. Upon request, Critical Resistance will provide individuals access to multiple publications and toolkits.

National Contact:

Critical Resistance
 1904 Franklin Street, Suite 504
 Oakland, CA 94612
 P: 510.444.0484

FAMILIES AGAINST MANDATORY MINIMUMS

<http://www.famm.org>

Families Against Mandatory Minimums publishes the FAMMGram three times a year, which includes information about injustices resulting from mandatory minimum sentencing laws with an emphasis on federal laws. Families Against Mandatory Minimums also serves as a national advocate against the use of mandatory minimum sentences within the judicial system.

National Contact:

Families Against Mandatory Minimums
1100 H Street, NW
Washington, DC 20005
P: 202.822.6700

GAY AND LESBIAN ADVOCATES AND DEFENDERS

<http://www.glad.org>

Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to impacting litigation on gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and HIV related civil rights and discrimination issues within the United States. Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders do not provide direct legal representation and maintains a strong presence in the New England area.

National Contact:

Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders
30 Winter Street, Suite 800
Boston, MA 02108
P: 617.426.1350

INNOCENCE PROJECT

<http://www.innocenceproject.org>

The Innocence Project is a national nonprofit legal clinic that handles cases where post conviction DNA testing can yield conclusive proof of innocence. Potential clients of the Innocence Project go through an extensive screening process to determine whether or not DNA testing of evidence could support their claim of innocence.

National Contact:

Innocence Project
55 5th Avenue, 11th Floor
New York, NY 10003
P: 212.364.5340

JUST DETENTION INTERNATIONAL

<http://www.justdetention.org>

Just Detention International seeks to end sexual violence against detainees in the United States and around the world. Just Detention International provides counseling resources for imprisoned and released rape survivors upon request. *Note:* Incarcerated individuals may communicate with Just Detention International using legal mail by addressing their correspondence to: Ms. Cynthia Totten, Esq. at the below address.

National Contact:

Just Detention International
3325 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 340
Los Angeles, CA 90010
P: 213.384.1400

JUSTICE AND MERCY

<http://www.justicemercy.org>

Justice and Mercy is a nonprofit, volunteer organization dedicated to decreasing the effects of crime in communities, increasing public safety, and restoring both crime victims and offenders. Justice and Mercy achieves these

goals by educating and informing the public at large, advocating cost-effective and practical reforms within the criminal justice system and by supporting and encouraging wise public policy.

National Contact:

Justice and Mercy
P.O. Box 223
Shillington, PA 19607
P: 610.208.0406

LEGAL ACTION CENTER

<http://www.lac.org>

The Legal Action Center is a national nonprofit organization that provides free legal services to formerly incarcerated people, recovering alcoholics, and substance abusers. The Legal Action Center provides services such as counseling to clients on unfair and discriminatory hiring practices and other legal problems for people with HIV infection and their families, past and current substance abusers, women and children. The Legal Action Center also serves as an advocate for change and reform in all aspects of the criminal justice system.

National Contact:

Legal Action Center
225 Varick Street
New York, NY 10014
P: 212.243.1313

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE | NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

<http://www.naacp.org>

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People is an African-American civil rights organization, formed in 1909. Its mission is “to ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of rights of all peoples and to eliminate racial hatred and racial discrimination”.

National Contact:

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
4805 Mt. Hope Drive
Baltimore, MD 21215
P: 410.580.5777

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE | NATIONAL PRISON PROJECT

<http://www.naacp.org>

The National Prison Project of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People works on ex-offender re-enfranchisement and racial disparities within the criminal justice system as well as providing the incarcerated with a vehicle of empowerment through the formation of institution based branches and chapters.

National Contact:

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
National Prison Project
8 West 26th Street
Baltimore, MD 21218
P: 410.358.8900

NATIONAL GAY & LESBIAN TASKFORCE

<http://www.thetaskforce.org>

The National Gay & Lesbian Taskforce seeks to combat all sexual orientation-based discrimination through extensive education and lobbying efforts. The National Gay & Lesbian Taskforce maintains and administers an information referral clearinghouse of over 4,000 organizations nationwide that provide assistance and guidance to those in need.

National Contact:

National Gay & Lesbian Taskforce
1824 14th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20009
P: 202.332.6482

NATIONAL LAWYERS GUILD

<http://www.nlg.org>

The National Lawyers Guild is an association dedicated to the need for basic change in the structure of our political and economic system. The National Lawyers Guild provides self-help law kits free of charge to assist offenders in representing themselves and their own cases or in assisting others. The self-help kits are written in an easy to use language that tells individuals how to file civil complaints, how to deal with grievances, and most other legal matters encountered during the course of being incarcerated.

National Contact:

National Lawyers Guild
132 Nassau Street, Room 922
New York, NY 10038
P: 212.679.5100

THE NATIONAL DEATH ROW ASSISTANCE NETWORK OF C.U.R.E.

<http://www.ndran.org>

The National Death Row Assistance Network of C.U.R.E. is an organization formed to help death row prisoners across the United States gain access to legal, financial, and community support and to assist individual efforts to act as self-advocates.

National Contact:

The National Death Row Assistance Network of C.U.R.E.
6 Tolman Road
Peaks Island, ME 04108
P: 888.255.6196

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE | CIVIL RIGHTS DIVISION

<http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/split>

The U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division is charged with enforcing the Civil Rights of Institutionalized Persons Act, which authorizes the U.S. Attorney General to conduct investigations and initiate litigation relating to conditions of confinement in state or locally operated institutions. They are also responsible for the enforcement of Title III of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act, the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, and the Safe Streets Act of 1968.

National Contact:

U.S. Department of Justice
Special Litigation Section, Civil Rights Division
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530
P: 202.514.6255

SEX OFFENDER REGISTRY & REFERRAL RESOURCES**THE DRU SJODIN NATIONAL SEX OFFENDER PUBLIC WEBSITE**

<http://www.nsopw.gov>

The Dru Sjodin National Sex Offender Public Website (NSOPW) is an unprecedented public safety resource that provides the public with access to sex offender data nationwide. NSOPW is a partnership between the U.S. Department of Justice and state, territorial, and tribal governments, working together for the safety of adults and children.

First established in 2005 as the National Sex Offender Public Registry (NSOPR), NSOPW was renamed by the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006 in honor of 22-year-old college student Dru Sjodin of Grand Forks, North Dakota, a young woman who was kidnapped and murdered by a sex offender who was registered in Minnesota.

NSOPW is the only U.S. government website that links public state, territorial, and tribal sex offender registries from one national search site. Parents, employers, and other concerned residents can utilize the Website's search tool to identify location information on sex offenders residing, working, and attending school not only in their own neighborhoods but in other nearby states and communities. In addition, the Website provides visitors with information about sexual abuse and how to protect themselves and loved ones from potential victimization.

STATE SEX OFFENDER REGISTRIES

State sex offender registries maintain and coordinate the registration of individuals convicted of certain sexual offenses within their jurisdiction. They may also provide registered sex offenders with information regarding their legal obligations under applicable state law and assistance with understanding or addressing any issues related to offense classification. Each state maintains its own sex offender registry according to both state and federal law.

State Contact:

Please refer to [Appendix 4-D: State Sexual Offender Registries](#).

ASSOCIATION FOR THE TREATMENT OF SEXUAL ABUSERS

<http://www.atsa.com>

The Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers is a nonprofit organization that serves as a national advocacy, research and referral center for the prevention and treatment of sexual abuse. The Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers maintains an extensive referral database of treatment providers, agencies and organizations willing to assist interested individuals with the treatment of sexually abusive behaviors.

National Contact:

Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers
4900 Southwest Griffith Drive, Suite 274
Beaverton, OR 97005
P: 503.643.1023

THE SAFER SOCIETY FOUNDATION

<http://www.safersociety.org>

The Safer Society Foundation is a national research, advocacy, and referral center on the prevention and treatment of sexual abuse. Individuals may write to receive referral information for treatment providers within their local community.

National Contact:

The Safer Society Foundation
P.O. Box 340
Brandon, VT 05733
P: 802.247.3132